

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Congressman John W. Olver (D-1st District) announced today that the fiscal year 2009 omnibus appropriations bill approved by Congress includes a little over \$34.3 million in federal assistance for various projects in North Worcester County.

Congressman Olver is a member of the Appropriations Committee and Chairman of the Transportation-HUD Appropriations Subcommittee and worked to include the funding in the omnibus spending legislation. The omnibus represents nine out of eleven annual appropriations bills pulled together into one package. The bill will fund most of the federal government's domestic activities in 2009.

The projects and their included dollar amounts are:

\$30 Million for Fitchburg Line

The funding will be used to make track improvements to improve the commuter line rail from Fitchburg to Boston. The goals of the project are to reduce travel time from a maximum of 90 minutes to approximately 60 minutes, to improve reliability from 83% to over 95% on-time schedule adherence, and to attract new riders to MBTA.

The funding, a Small Starts grant from the US Department of Transportation's Federal Transit Administration, was included in President's Bush's fiscal year 2009 budget request. The request was then approved by Congressman Olver's appropriations subcommittee.

"Only 13 Small Starts projects nationwide made it into the president's budget, most of which were funded at \$10 million or under. The Fitchburg rail project stood

up to rigid scrutiny, and was selected as one of the best Small Starts projects in the country. All we are waiting for now is the state bond bill so this project can go forward," Congressman John Olver said. "We can be in construction within 18 months after it passes," he added.

\$1.19 Million for Mt.

Wachusett Collaborative Wind Project

Mt. Wachusett Community College is proposing to install two wind turbines on campus. Using the lessons learned throughout the process, the College will create a template for regional partners to replicate for wind turbine construction. A portion of this money could potentially be used for a wind project in the Town of Templeton.

Congressman John Olver said, "The installation of wind turbines will lessen the College's dependence on the electrical grid, reduce its carbon footprint, and providing a teaching tool for students. This project is yet another example of the MWCC's efforts to implement innovative programs promoting renewable energy both on campus and throughout the surrounding community."

For additional information, please contact:

 Edward Terceiro, 978-630-9103,
eterceiro@mwcc.mass.edu

.

**\$400,000 for North Worcester County Drug Task Force
Interoperable Credentialing**

This project is led by the North Worcester County Drug Task Force (NWCDTF), which is a consortium of nine area municipal law enforcement agencies. NWCDTF seeks to leverage existing and

emerging technologies to provide a single nationally operable credentialing system that provides individual credentialing as well as controlled access to the members' secure facilities.

In a time when budget cuts are forcing Departments to lay off personnel towns are more dependent on mutual aid. By credentialing individuals crime, accident and fire scenes are better managed for people's expertise is certified at the scene and they can be assigned duties to which they are qualified to do. Additionally with fewer individuals to man Departments providing a secure facility is critical for protecting the safety of individuals and the integrity of evidence collected at crime scenes.

Congressman John Olver said, "In light of our current budgetary situation and personnel cuts any assistance we can provide our law enforcement agencies to keep our communities safe is important."

***For additional information, please contact: ***

Chief Dennis Perron, Hubbardston Police Department, 978-257-7525,
chiefperron@charterinternet.com

.

\$100,000 for Slack Brook Stabilization Project Feasibility Study

These funds will be used to complete a feasibility study of bank stabilization along Slack Brook in Leominster. A 2,100 foot section of Exchange Street between Colonial Drive and Birch Street is endangered due to over-construction up-hill of this area. This over-construction has left the area without adequate runoff for storm waters which is causing a major erosion of the brook's steep banks. The purpose of the study is to provide the City with more detailed information on the alternatives, recommended solutions and potential permitting issues.

Congressman John Olver said, “This section of Exchange Street services between 1500 and 200 vehicles per day, not to mention several middle and elementary school buses and homes. We cannot risk this road being washed out.”

For additional information, please contact:

Mayor Dean Mazzearella, 978-534-7500.

\$380,000 for Twin Cities CDC Whitney Renovation **Affordable Housing**

This funding will contribute towards the Twin Cities Community Development Corporation's (CDC) development of the historic Whitney Building in Leominster. The property is located

at 142 Water Street in the Comb and Carriage neighborhood of downtown Leominster. The project will create 40 units of quality affordable housing, while providing a model of how to remodel older mill buildings.

Congressman John Olver said, “Not only will this project address the palpable need for affordable housing in Leominster, it will also serve as an example of a green historic renovation. This effort kills two birds with one stone – it provides the city with badly needed affordable housing while giving an old building new life.”

***For additional information, please contact: Marc Dohan,
978-342-9561,
mdohan@twincitiescdc.org***

.

\$1.9 million for Parking Structure at North Leominster Commuter Station

This funding will allow MART to build a 350 car parking structure adjacent to the new commuter rail station in North Leominster. MART currently has a 140 car parking lot in

this location, but the need for commuter parking exceeds the spaces available.

Congressman John Olver said, “Public transit is good for the health of our communities and our environment. We have got to do everything we can to incentive its use. The addition of these 210 parking spaces will encourage people to park and ride.”

For additional information, please contact:

Mohammed Khan, Administrator; Montachusett RTA,
978-345-9867,

mkhan@mrta.us

.

\$71,300 for Mt. Wachusett Community College’s SIMS Project

The funding will be used to expand the simulated instructional mannequin system (SIMS) within the community college system along the Northern Tier, allowing for all areas of healthcare to utilize SIMS as a

training tool. Participating colleges will include MWCC, Greenfield Community College and Berkshire Community College. The total funding for the project is \$214,000. Each institution will receive one third of the total funding, or \$71,300.

"These 'virtual hospitals' provide excellent training opportunities for faculty and students as well as regional health care employers, physicians, incumbent nurses, and health care professionals,"

Congressman John Olver said. "In these difficult economic times, it is necessary to provide resources to our local community colleges to retrain those who have recently become unemployed."

For additional information, please contact:
President Dan Asquino- 978-632-6600

\$190,000 for Community Health Connections
Fitchburg Center Revitalization

This funding will contribute toward Community Health Connection's (CHC) revitalization of the Fitchburg Center. The Health Alliance Hospital sold a portion of their Burbank Campus to Community Health Connections for \$1, but the building is in need of renovations to bring it up to standard and to improve the infrastructure in order to lower operating costs.

Congressman John Olver said, "The Fitchburg Center is in need of expansion, renovation and cost-saving infrastructure improvements. The Center currently sees over 25,000 patients, but after this work is completed they will have 25 percent more space to accommodate additional patients who desperately need health care."

For additional information, please contact:

Robert Johnson, 978-878-8501,

rjohnson@chcfhc.org

.

\$78,600 for Greater Gardner CDC Training Collaborative for Low-Income Adults

** **

This project addresses the unmet need for service training for those seeking to enter the workforce or improve their employment opportunities in order to earn a living wage. The project will focus on imparting customer service/interpersonal skills, computer skills and career counseling. The program will work with individuals whose family income is at or below 200 percent of poverty level.

** **

Congressman John Olver said, “Nearly half of all new job offerings are jobs that can be learned in a relatively short period of time. This program teaches the basic skills necessary to find and hold these jobs.”

** **

For additional information, please contact:

James Cruickshank, Greater Gardner CDC,
978-630-2975,

jcuickshank@ggcdc.org

.

###